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*Anglican Church School Education Moving Beyond the First Two Hundred Years*. Edited by Howard J. Worsley. Pp 269. London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic. 2014.

What is distinctive about education in schools with a church foundation and what is the role of such schools within a state-maintained system of education? This question challenges the theological, social and educational rationale underpinning Anglican schooling and so deserves attention. It is just over two hundred years since the establishment in 1811 of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales. The subsequent historical development of Anglican educational provision is traced during a number of chapters in this book. But the book does not just consider the role that Anglican schools have played in the past; other chapters examine current policy and philosophy, reflect on present-day practice and look to future provision. Written following the Watson Symposium, a gathering of academics and educators held in Hackney in 2011, the book deserves to be read by those with an interest in Christian education, including school leaders, clergy, foundation governors, teacher educators, policymakers and academic researchers. The focus lies on Anglican education but there is much by way of scholarly writing and empirical findings to offer educational thinkers from other denominations. The work is informed by educational, sociological and theological perspectives and the reader will find the key questions that accompany each chapter to be useful prompts for further reflection and deliberation.

The book opens by presenting the historical legacy of church schools. The setting up of the National Society and the contribution of Joshua Watson is traced and the different influences of both the high church and evangelical wings in the context of nineteenth-century schooling are revealed. A significant chapter (Chadwick) unpacks the pressures between church and state in setting up the dual system during the twentieth century, with particular attention to the ongoing dilemma over whether service to church community or wider educational commitment should best serve the missionary purpose of the Anglican school. Here, the changes concerning the role and provision of religious education over the last century are especially relevant given the contemporary political landscape and fast-changing multicultural, multifaith UK society.

Part two deepens the discussion by drawing upon philosophical and theological thinking, both conceptual and practical. The reader is reminded of the current market-driven commodification of education, with an alternative call for church schools to a preferential option for the poor (Astley). Such theology of ministry and service may sit at odds with current educational thinking and cause discomfort to some Christian educational foundations. But one of the questions from the 1970 Durham Report concerned the Church of England's domestic (inward-looking) or general (serve the nation) purposes in offering church schools. The fact that this question is still being discussed today is significant. What is particularly challenging is evidence from some contributors (Francis & Penny; Everett) to suggest that Anglican schools do not provide an alternative or distinctive ethos from schools with no religious character and that the values and ethos expressed by pupils in Church of England schools largely concur with secular host culture. This should prevent the reader being lulled into any sense of false security.

The third section offers further food for thought in relation to current practice in Anglican schools. The reminder of Robert Waddington's 10 characteristics of a church school from his 1984 work *A Future in Partnership* caught my attention (Brown, pp. 152–153) and, I suggest, could encourage theologically reflective practice among church school leaders today. A new distinctively Christian pedagogy for Church of England schools, *What If learning* (Cooling), presents an approach that is rooted in Christian theology and anthropological vision. A strong stance emerges from Andrew Wright's chapter proposing that the Anglican school must stand against theological relativism in the light of contemporary secular liberalism. Incarnational theology is upheld as a paradigm for the Anglican Church to be grounded in contemporary culture yet simultaneously able to transform it. These chapters are valuable examples of current theological reflection and wisdom informing both educational philosophy and practice.

The final section of the book looks back to the future. Two hundred years after the start of the church school movement by the National Society, there is a sense of being at a crossroads, with a risk of prioritising technical and performance focus over theological and missiological reflection (Elbourne). How can church schools promote their distinctive identity and tradition at the same time as promoting tolerance for community cohesion? Do Anglican schools thrive on their rhetoric or can they live up to the Christian reality they profess? (Stern) The final chapters return to consider the core identity and abiding nature and purpose of church schooling in today's changing culture.

*Anglican Church School Education Moving Beyond the First Two Hundred Years* is a stimulating and informative read. There is some repetitive material, especially relating to the foundation of the National Society and the historical story of the rise of Anglican schooling. This is understandable given the book emerged following the celebratory Watson Symposium in 2011 and there is eagerness for a founding story to be told. Overall, the book seeks a theological and educational rationale for the Church of England's investment in Anglican schools. What it communicates is a rich sense of the contribution that these schools have made to our country both in past context and present times. This contribution remains alive and active and must now be carried into the future.